



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

DANNY K. DAVIS
7TH DISTRICT - ILLINOIS

January 17, 2019

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to ask you to sign on as a co-sponsor to H.R. 96 - To amend Title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish dental care in the same manner as any other medical service, and for other purposes.

At present, dental care is only provided a) to veterans who are 100 percent disabled for service-connected conditions, or b) if the resolution of another medical condition that is service-connected is dependent on the dental care. In emergency situations that are not otherwise covered, veterans are treated, but charged for the service.

This fee, touted as keeping a handful of relatively well-off veterans from free services, otherwise penalizes hundreds of thousands of veterans who suffer from low wages, involuntary part-time employment, or intermittent unemployment. As a consequence, unable to pay the charge, their needed dental care is neglected. This has negative consequences for both themselves and their dependents.

Dental care should be part of the coverage afforded veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). It is strongly related to other facets of our physical health. Correlations exist between good dental care and favorable medical results in treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Diabetes, Dry Mouth Syndrome, Orthopedic Conditions, Periodontal Disease, Blood Disorders, Bacterial Infections, Multiple Myeloma (caused by exposure to Agent Orange), Cirrhosis, Gastric Reflux, Alzheimer's Disease and a number of other conditions.

Current medical literature emphasizes the necessity of good dental care in achieving positive medical results. The literature highlights how the lack of good dental health is a major cause of numerous medical complications. These correlations have been known for a long time. By providing dental care, the VA System would be working in a more fiscally responsible and efficient manner by helping to improve desirable medical and dental outcomes and helping to reduce the number of medical complications. In other words, an ounce of prevention is far cheaper than a ton of cure.

Please sign on to H.R. 96 and help pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danny K. Davis".

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

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